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THE TEMPTATION OF ST. ANTHONY

Bel Ami International Competition and Exhibition of New Paintings by Eleven American and European Artists

1946-1947

BEL AMI INTERNATIONAL ART COMPETITION

THE TEMPTATION OF ST. ANTHONY

An exhibition of eleven paintings by noted American and European artists submitted in competition for the selection of the one to be featured in the Loew-Lewin motion picture based on Guy de Maupassant's novel

THE PRIVATE AFFAIRS OF BEL AMI

The exhibition will be circulated in the United States, England, and possibly France until the end of 1947 by

THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF ARTS, BARR BUILDING, WASHINGTON, D. C.

temptation

JUDGES OF THE COMPETITION

MARCEL DUCHAMP: "Jurors are always apt to be wrong. The only argument in favor of this jury is that the three differed in their selection of the first, second, and third prizes, showing how close the decision was. But even the conviction of having been fair does not change my doubts on the right to judge at all."

ALFRED H. BARR, JR.: "In an age when traditional legends and symbols have almost disappeared from art, the St. Anthony competition seems to me exceptionally significant. Its centuries-old subject involved living artists in rivalry both among themselves and, in a sense, between themselves and some of the great artists of the past. Memories of paintings by Bosch and Ensor, Teniers and Callot and above all Schongauer and Grünewald greatly complicated the problem of awarding the prize. For as a member of the jury I felt I ought to weigh not only esthetic quality, in the narrowest sense, and psychological pertinence, but also the factor of originality. Consequently I found it very hard to choose among the top three or four competitors."

SIDNEY JANIS: "If this competition is any indication of what artists can do when inspired by a well-chosen theme, then happily I reverse my former stand against art competitions. The subject evidently caught the imagination of the painters, for the level of the work submitted was remarkably high. Because any one of several of the paintings was worthy of the prize, an additional responsibility was placed upon the jury to make the final award. It was most gratifying to serve with Alfred H. Barr, Jr., and Marcel Duchamp, whose liberal viewpoints and open-mindedness made possible a decision that, however close, was acceptable to all the jurors."

(Opposite page, left to right: Marcel Duchamp, Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Sidney Janis)

FINE ART AND THE FILMS

ALBERT LEWIN

When, after many years, I re-read de Maupassant's "Bel Ami" with the idea of making it into a movie, I was delighted to find that a distinguished painting was used by the author to serve a dramatic purpose in the latter part of the story. This seemed a favorable augury, as painters and paintings had fulfilled similar functions in my two preceding pictures, "The Moon and Sixpence" and "The Picture of Dorian Gray."

In de Maupassant's book the subject of the painting was "Christ Walking on the Waters." But the Code Authority, which is the committee set up by the motion picture producers for the self-censorship of movies before their release, advised me that this subject was unacceptable. Censorship does not permit the physical portrayal of Christ on the screen. Moreover, de Maupassant used the image of Christ in an ironical way, making the face of Jesus resemble that of "Bel Ami," a very bad man. So cynical an implication was out of the question in my movie.

I was not disheartened by these difficulties. I had already conceived the idea of inviting an outstanding contemporary painter to do the canvas for my picture, and I knew that the subject of "Christ Walking on the Waters" had never been especially tempting to painters. The only great painting of this theme that I could readily recall was the beautiful one of Tintoretto. It occurred to me that for the purpose of my story, which is a dramatization of the struggle between good and evil (particularly as applied to the character of Madame Walter, who had a strong religious conviction), the theme of *The Temptation of Saint Anthony* was more fitting as well as altogether acceptable to the censors. I was also aware that, in choosing this subject, I was taking a theme which has never failed to fascinate the greatest of painters since medieval times.

The idea of a general competition was suggested as having publicity value for "The Private Affairs of Bel Ami," but I shrank from the inevitable deluge of mediocrity such a contest would bring. The plan for a limited competition came out of a luncheon discussion with Hansi Janis. This plan seemed to offer the best possibility for obtaining a fine modern painting for my movie. Moreover, we felt that such a contest, conducted with dignity, would serve the cause of popularizing notable achievements in contemporary painting, while at the same time publicizing "The Private Affairs of Bel Ami." My partner, David L. Loew, approved of the plan without hesitation.

The response exceeded our hopes. Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Marcel Duchamp, and Sidney Janis agreed to serve as jurors. We knew then that the painters would have not only a subject which appealed to them, but the assurance that their work would be judged on an esthetic level of unquestionable integrity.

We determined to grant the painters the additional inducement of retaining

ownership of their canvases. We were merely to have the use of them for a two-year loan exhibition period. On these terms we received acceptances from twelve distinguished contemporary artists: Ivan Le Lorraine Albright, Eugene Berman, Leonora Carrington, Salvador Dali, Paul Delvaux, Max Ernst, Louis Guglielmi, Horace Pippin, Abraham Rattner, Stanley Spencer, Dorothea Tanning, and Leonor Fini. Of these twelve only one, Leonor Fini, was unable to deliver her canvas on the required date.

I myself have been from the start thrilled by the project. The idea seemed to me unique and important—to enable the public to see at one showing so many paintings by outstanding living artists on an identical subject. It had its analogy in the dramatic competitions of the classic Greek theatre. It stressed treatment in the place of subject matter and mere novelty—the curse of modern art, the curse, one might say, of modern life. I could almost wish it were possible to persuade a group of movie producers to make other versions of "Bel Ami" in competition with mine.

Finally, just before going into production with "The Private Affairs of Bel Ami," I was able to see the eleven paintings in New York. I was stunned. The paintings were superb. The artists seemed to have been inspired. I felt that "The Private Affairs of Bel Ami" had become the occasion of an important event in the art world, an event that might well be remembered when my movie was forgotten. I wished that I might thank each of the jurors and each of the artists individually and personally. I was very proud.

Credits—Photographers: Leftwich 2, 3, 19, 22, 30; Huston-Pix 9, 29; Faxon 13; Parker-Condax 24; Sunami 10, 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, 23, 25, 27. Publications: *California Arts and Architecture*, 3; color plate courtesy *Harper's Bazaar*.

COMPETITION AND EXHIBITION

HARRIET AND SIDNEY JANIS

In view of the highly secular nature of all contemporary advance guard painting, it is remarkable to find a group of pictures so brilliantly dedicated to a religious subject as the paintings of *The Temptation of St. Anthony* now on view. Yet the very qualities needed to carry through the projection of a religious theme of this nature are all present in modern painting, from the austerity and spiritual attenuation of a Mondrian, to the introspective fantasy and symbolic imagery of the Surrealists.

The competition, sponsored by Loew-Lewin in connection with the making of the film, "The Private Affairs of Bel Ami," was inspired by the need to include a painting characterized as a masterpiece in the 1885 Paris salon milieu of the de Maupassant story. Albert Lewin, director of the film, had already set a precedent in demonstrating the possibilities of art of the highest esthetic level for the cinema by his controversial yet masterful solution in "The Picture of Dorian Gray."

The competition, too, was aimed at uncompromising standards and provided terms of a liberality and generosity new to our present day scheme of art competition. The plan, based uniquely on a single theme, also contained the unusual provision that each artist be paid a fee of $500, at the same time retaining possession of his picture. The winner, the gifted painter Max Ernst, whose painting is featured in the film, received an additional award of $2500. The invitation included artists from England and Belgium, artists in exile living in the United States, and American artists. An extended exhibition tour, opening in New York, will take place both in the United States and abroad.

Because of the nature of the subject, the artists invited were Surrealists or painters of similar tendencies, and preferably those whose use of Victorian or other nineteenth century motifs would be sympathetic to the general atmosphere of a story of that period.

The theme, the struggle between good and evil, is universal in appeal. Virtually all the participants gave it fascinating and original interpretations, while several resolved the esthetic problem involved with such distinction that the judges debated for three hours before arriving at a decision.

The paintings range through the different stages of temptation from the voluptuous phase to that of delirious torture and from torment to the emergence of spiritual purification. Some show creative influences from medieval and Renaissance sources, while others employ the most advanced contemporary ideas and techniques; some are poetic, others psychological to the point of being directly Freudian in symbolism. Yet, whatever the individual approach, all constitute so stimulating and important a group of paintings that they offer an authentic and interesting basis for comparison

with the many compelling versions of the subject that have come down from centuries far more devoted to the religious subject in painting than our own.

The Ernst painting (reproduced in color on the cover) presents a St. Anthony in the throes of extreme subjective torment. So violent is the delirium of this obsessed saint that his fevered imagination has symbolized and externalized the pain of the struggle in the guise of a group of terrifyingly hideous creatures. Horned and crustaceous, a cross between the most revoltingly distorted features of animal, bird, reptile and human form and spirit, they prey upon him with vindictive, perverse and gleeful greed and lust.

The body of St. Anthony, contorted by this titanic inner struggle, twists in an arch over a deep chasm below which are the ominously still waters of death. Paranoiac spiders, demons and monsters, embedded in the surrounding rock formations, leer down on the scene, the very intensity of which brings it, like a close-up, into the foreground of the painting. Only after the hypnotic spell of horror is somewhat shaken off does one notice in the middle ground the presentation of the theme of sacred and profane love—in the lush center the figure of an earthly temptress; to the right, high on a pedestal, the figure of woman exalted. The waters of the background, quiet too, now harbor the triumph over the struggle, the assurance of spiritual peace.

Resulting from the modern techniques and general approach of the confirmed surrealist, this painting is nevertheless in the great tradition of German medieval art, particularly close in spirit to the *St. Anthony* of Grünewald, and makes its contribution to that tradition. The decalcomania technique originating with Ernst serves admirably for his interpretation. The type of images customarily suggested to and developed by Ernst from the accident of chance are extremely adaptable to the theme and spirit of the St. Anthony legend and make of it a thoroughly contemporary version. In fact, the group of paintings as a whole constitute an important 20th Century contribution to this fascinating theme.

On the following pages reproductions of the artists' paintings, and brief biographies, are accompanied by statements from the artists. The artists' statements are in the larger type.

MAX ERNST

Winner of the $3,000 prize, whose painting, reproduced on the cover, will be featured in color in the motion picture "The Private Affairs of Bel Ami"

Shrieking for help and light across the stagnant water of his dark sick soul, St. Anthony receives as an answer the echo of his fear: the laughter of the monsters created by his visions.

Born near Cologne, Germany, in 1891. Studied philosophy, University of Bonn. No formal art training. Served in German Army, first World War. With Baargeld founded the Cologne Dada group in 1918-20. In 1922 went to Paris, where he became a member of the original Surrealist group. Still living in Paris when war came in 1939, Ernst was confined as an enemy alien. During the Occupation he was put into a second concentration camp as an outstanding modern artist whose work—anathema to Hitler—had been banned in Germany. In 1941 Ernst escaped from France and came to New York. He is recognized today as a leading international Surrealist artist: painter, sculptor, writer, designer of ballet sets. He has invented or developed several unusual techniques, among them *frottage*, a rubbing method of drawing and painting. He is also famous for his collage "novels," such as "The Girl with the Hundred Heads." These are series of pasted paper compositions combining representations of human figures with the heads, claws, wings, beaks, and tails of birds, beasts, and reptiles which, bound in serial order, recount fantastic Surrealist legends.

IVAN LE LORRAINE ALBRIGHT

I

In raucous wealth
In cymbal gaiety
Was I conceived and born
But now
Hermit and Saint
Hear my murmur
Feel my complaint
St. Anthony of old
Let it be retold
How I was tortured and flayed
As on a cavern floor I tossed and lay
As 'twixt screams I inward did pray
Go away! Go away
You women would draw me to foul lust and deep despair
By the roots of my bleeding hair
Heave off, foul wenches
Go — clabber on other men's roomside benches
You gutted beasts — you vermined vampires
Lay off
You deviled minds
Let me be
For I a Saint
Am without taint
Get hence you pit-wetted wenches
To your Bel Ami
But, lo!
How was I to know
That the torture through life in death me would follow
And leave me to the curse
Of long-brained artists
Who on linen paint
The beasts they fashion but not the Saint
For who of my feelings aught would know
Save him who through similar role did die and live
And not the artist he would be
But an unweighted soul
Who with an inner eye an eye could see
And by an inner thought an inner thought could descry
Such a one it would take

To make
A saint not just of linen and paint
But of the tortures of the damned
Any brush-wielding ham would do
For painted beasts and painted cave
Painted women who would please a knave
But of the virtues fine
Let them get theirs as I got mine
What vampire assumptions do they assume
To try to paint
God filtering through their studio room.

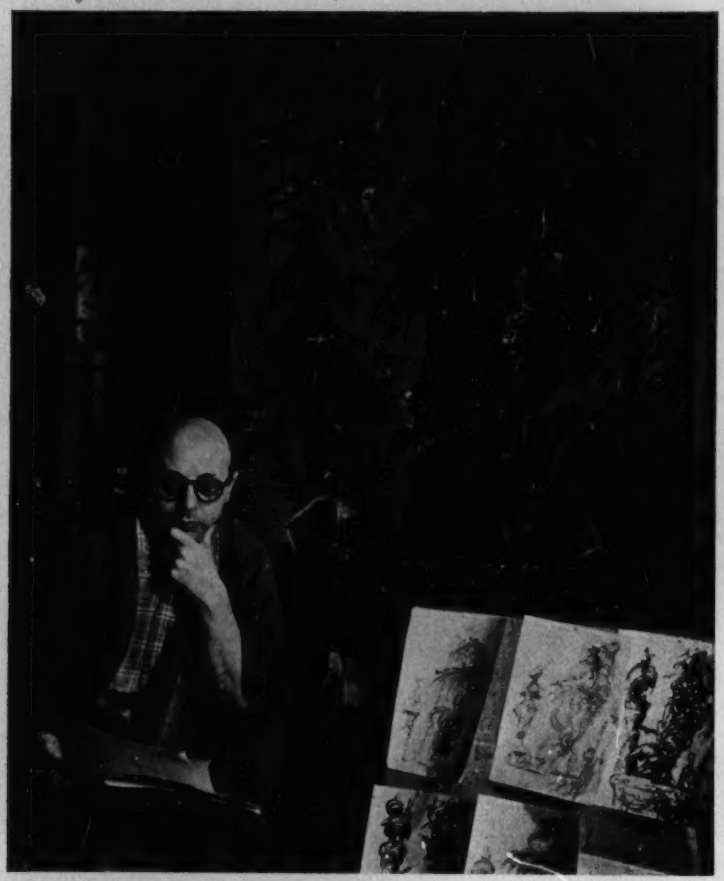
II

He lay on a stone
In a cave he lay
His mouth did form
A fervent prayer to pray
Saint and Hermit was he
For he was Saint Anthony of old
He lived in the mountains of Egypt
In a cavernous dank hole
In the side of a mountain
In the side of a hill
By a break in the cave's rocky roof
Sits the sky of Egypt aloof
An unsinned man was Saint Anthony
But foul tempted was he
By the devil and his hordes
By woman and by beast
But by a crust of bread
And faith is the life he lonely led
But through the hot sun — to the cool of his cave
Stalked the rodents and the beasts
And women to make him undo his holy vow
To be not like you or me
One day as he quietly lay
Counting the chariot wheels in ancient heaven
There was a darkness and a roar
And in his chamber from the water pits below
Arose both wolf and dog — both fish and fowl
And damsels two with muscle and power
To struggle and to pull him to the pit below
Where would end the chastity of faith

But he would not go although tortured and pulled
He counted through his pain and distress
The chariot wheels as they spun around the ancient sun
With their inlays of precious stones and ivory
He saw the old angels' cloud-like faces
And pushed away the bare reality
Of muck and stone
And pushed away the beasts and women made of muck and grizzle-bone
For his real home was on high
And his nightmarish dream was but on earth
In the cold cave where he was but tortured and did lie.
And now Saint Anthony is long gone and dead
For he is up there moving and flying
And under him are fast-moving and rolling
Chariot wheels of inlays and of stone
And around him are cloud-like faces
And once and anon
He passes over Egypt in the brightness of the sun
And far below him glints with baleful light the stone
Of the hill — of the mountain
Where was his earth cave
That years ago he used for an earthly home.

Born 1897 in Chicago, one of twin brothers who are both painters; father also a painter. After year of architectural study, served in World War I. Became medical draftsman in France. Returning, studied under four-year scholarship at the Art Institute of Chicago. Then to Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and in 1924 to National Academy of Design in New York. Lives in Warrensville, Illinois. Winner of long list of prizes given by academic as well as modern art juries. Worked ten years on most famous painting, the rotting door with the withered funeral wreath: *That Which I Should Have Done I Did Not Do*, which won innumerable prizes. In 1944 went to Hollywood studios of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer to paint the portrait for the film of Oscar Wilde's "Dorian Gray."

EUGENE BERMAN



Born 1899 in St. Petersburg, Russia. At the time of the Revolution, left Russia and traveled through Europe but lived and worked chiefly in Paris, where he became a co-organizer of the Neo-Romantic movement. First large exhibition held in Paris in 1926; first one-man exhibition in America at the Julien Levy Gallery in 1932. Came to this country in 1935 and is now an American citizen, living in Hollywood. Besides his easel paintings, he has done murals and numerous decorative jobs. Has also designed costumes and sets for several ballets produced by the Monte Carlo Ballet, Ballet Theatre and the City Center, including "Romeo and Juliet," "Dance Concerto," and "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme." Berman has recently been awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship to do sketching and architectural research in South America.

I do not believe in artists writing interpretations of their work. My work must speak for itself.

The picture seems pretty clear to me, being a more or less literal rendering of St. Anthony complete with pig, desert and temptation. Naturally one could ask why the venerable holy man has three heads—to which one could always reply, why not?

You will notice the veteran's suit to be whitish and of an umbrellaoid form which would lead one to believe that the original colour had been washed or bleached out by the vagaries of the weather or that the monkish apparel had been cleverly constructed out of used mummy wrappings in umbrella or sunshade form as a protection from sand storms and sun, practical for someone leading an open air life and given to contemplation (as Egyptologists apparently didn't exist in those days, mummy wrappings were no doubt to be gathered like blackberries and therefore to one of an economical and modest turn of mind they would provide a durable and apt clothing for the desert).

The Saint's traditional pet pig who lies across the nether half of the picture and reviews the observer out of its kindly blue eye is adequately accounted for in the myth of St. Anthony, and likewise the continually flowing water and the ravine.

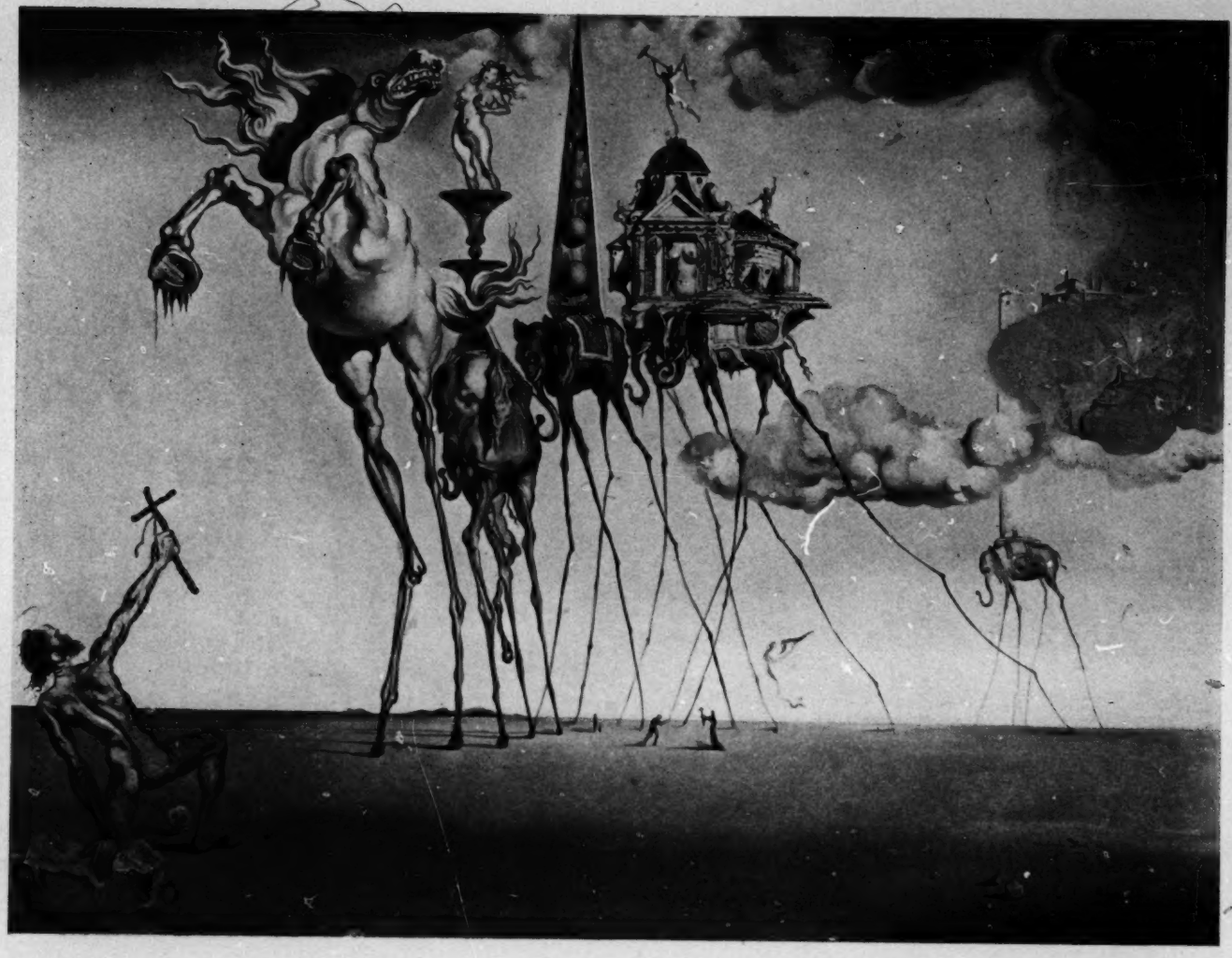
The bald-headed girl in the red dress combines female charm and the delights of the table—you will notice that she is engaged in making an unctuous broth of (let us say) lobsters, mushrooms, fat turtle, spring chicken, ripe tomatoes, gorgonzola cheese, milk chocolate, onions and tinned peaches. The mixture of these ingredients has overflowed and taken on a greenish and sickly hue to the fevered vision of St. Anthony, whose daily meal consists of whithered grass and tepid water with an occasional locust by way of an orgy.

On the right, the Queen of Sheba and her attendants emerge in ever-decreasing circles out of a subterranean landscape towards the hermit. Their intention is ambiguous, their progress spiral.

And last to the ram with the earthenware jar one could only quote the words of Friar Bacon's brazen head: Time was—Time is—Time is past. I was always pleased with the simple idocy of these words.

LEONORA CARRINGTON

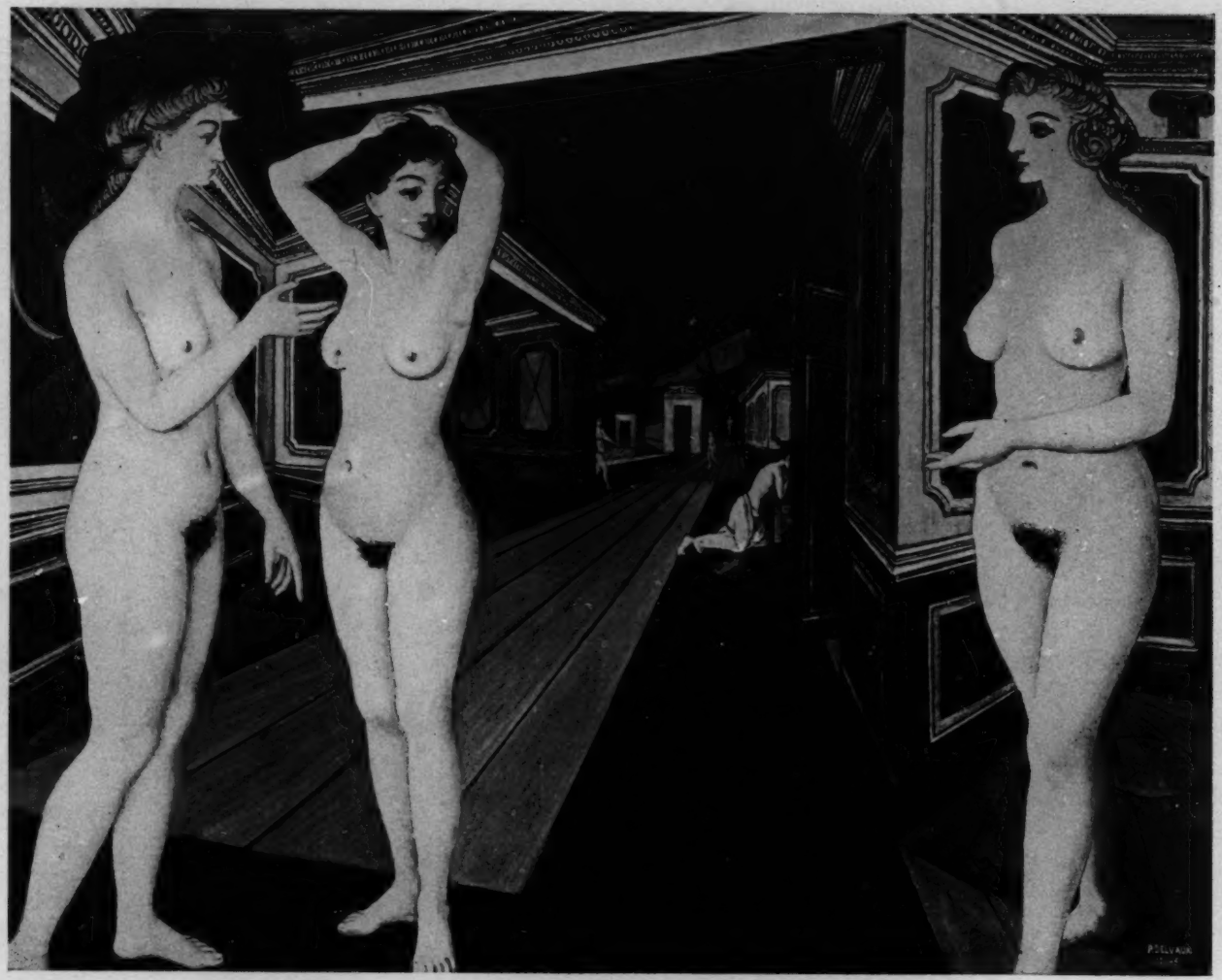
Born Lancashire, England, in 1917. Started painting at the age of four and was entirely self-taught until the age of nineteen. She then studied at the Ozenfant Academy in London where she acquired technical skill. This training, however, was completely revolutionized by her encounter with the Surrealists in Paris. Considered an English painter and writer, she has lived in France, Lisbon and New York and now makes her home in Mexico.



SALVADOR DALI

The hermit sees in the clouds the paranoiac hallucinations of his temptation. Elephants carrying on their backs erotic fountains, obelisks, churches and escurials. The elephants stride on almost invisible legs of spiders of desire. With outstretched arm the Saint bears his cross to exorcise this vision.

Born Figueras, Spain (Catalonia), in 1904. Began painting at a very early age, studying intermittently at the Madrid School of Fine Arts. Went to Paris in 1928 where he was immediately recognized by the Surrealist group. His contribution to Surrealism has been his double imagery which he terms "paranoiac-critical activity," and which he achieves with the precision of what he calls "hand-done color photography." Has been in America since 1936 and since then has been a center of attraction in the art world. His one-man shows in New York attract huge throngs and are immediate sell-outs. Author of several books, co-author-director of two famous Surrealist films, and since 1939 has designed the decor and costumes of four complete ballets. Now, among divers activities, engaged in writing the score and book for a complete opera.



PAUL DELVAUX

Born at Antheit-lez-Huy, Belgium, in 1898. Lives in Brussels, where he and Magritte are leading Surrealists. Throughout World War II, continued to paint. Has participated in Surrealist manifestations. Influenced by a trip to Italy, which increased his enthusiasm for antique architecture. Has had one-man exhibitions in The Hague, Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels. Has exhibited, and also has works in prominent collections in Paris, Brussels, London, Antwerp and elsewhere. Also exhibited in Exposition Internationale du Surrealisme in 1938 in Paris.

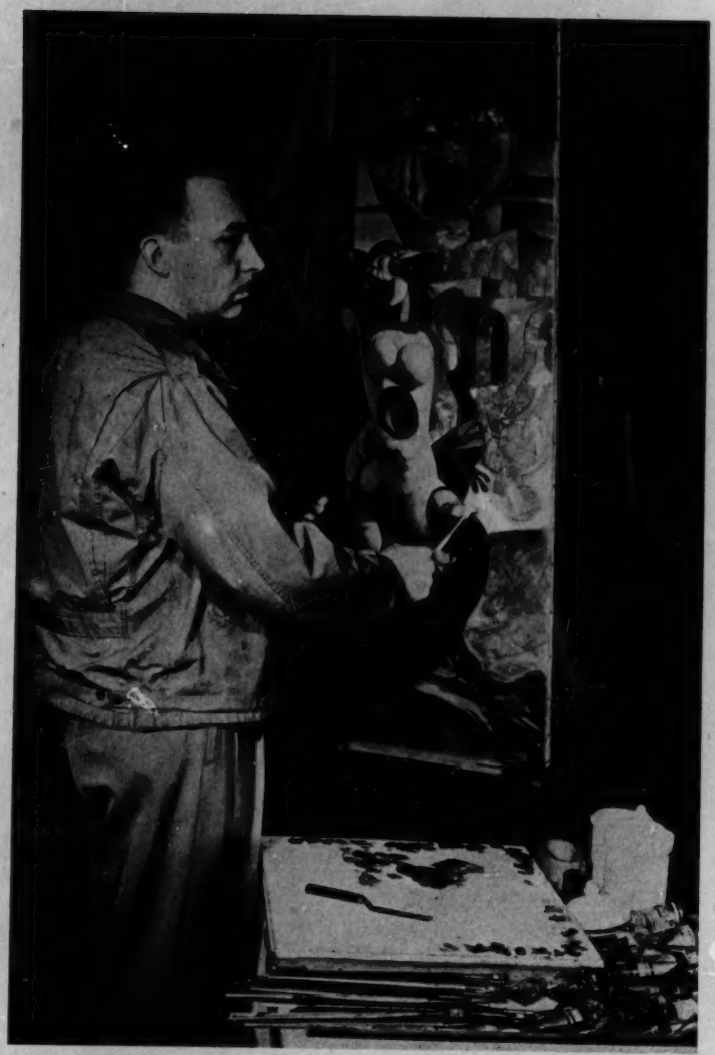
In general, one shows St. Anthony assailed by all sorts of bizarre and terrible animals which represent all the vices and evil instincts; to me it has seemed that woman alone sufficed to torment poor St. Anthony.

In effect, the beautiful feminine nudities with all their qualities of seduction and enchantment have not in my opinion the need of other elements in order to give St. Anthony sufficient tortures; moreover, for the painter, it is also an opportunity for painting nude women of the greatest possible seductiveness, which is a very important plastic element.

And then there is also the eclat of the color of flesh dancing in the somber landscape where mystery takes hold upon the inquietude and the anguish of St. Anthony.

And, for me, St. Anthony is no longer the saint in the brown monk's robe but rather a young man with a drapery preyed upon by feminine temptation. The action transpires in a place where there are paneled walls as in certain bourgeois houses belonging to the end of the last century, the different tones of which serve to enhance the color of the nudes while placing the scene in the strange atmosphere that is necessary to it.

Add to this the architecture of the background and the mountains that close the horizon, which serve also to sustain the anguish of the scene.



Born Cairo, Egypt, in 1906, of Italian parents. Came to United States in 1914. Attended National Academy of Design for five years. For six years earned his livelihood as factory hand, store clerk, commercial artist and assistant to mural painter. In 1932 again began to paint seriously. Won fellowship for summer at MacDowell Colony. Later was a painter on the Federal Art Project (W.P.A.). Has held one-man exhibitions at the Downtown Gallery, New York, and has exhibited in many important museums and national exhibitions. He is represented in the Whitney Museum of American Art and in the Museum of Modern Art, and was among the few younger artists shown in the American Exhibition at the Musée du Jeu de Paume, Paris.

LOUIS GUGLIELMI

Anthony, his slumber disturbed with a great hunger and desire. Hallucinatory images appear to him. The wall he erected against a world he long ago renounced betrays a city, possibly Paris with all its corruption, power and glitter. The dream figure on the right is the eternal enchantress, the temptress suggesting all the worldly temptations. The ladder on the left is Anthony's heavenly aspiration. In the conflict caused by the dream he beckons for divine guidance and his face is lighted with heavenly light.

HORACE PIPPIN

To me it is the greatest of all of his temptations. The Devil had him up in the cloud, then let him go. St. Anthony landed on the edge of a rocky cliff. There, to me, he came to the greatest temptation of all, that is, to me here he is either to give up everlasting life or obtain everlasting life, for at this time he felt as if every bone in his body were broken, and he felt that Deathe would be better. He almost made up his mind to do what Deathe told him, and saw Lust. She told him to choose life, and enjoy it, so I named the painting The Greatest Temptation of St. Anthony.

Born in West Chester, Pennsylvania, February 22, 1888; died there July 6, 1946. Fought in World War I and was severely wounded. Began painting and making a pictorial record of his war experiences and childhood memories, and also of more contemporary subjects and still life. Pippin had painted intermittently since he was fifteen but it was not until 1937, when he exhibited at the Chester County Art Association, that he was really discovered. The same year he had a one-man exhibition there which was followed by one-man shows at the Carlen Galleries, Philadelphia, in 1940 and 1941, the Bignou Gallery, New York, in 1940, the Arts Club of Chicago, 1941, and the San Francisco Museum of Art, 1942. He was also included in the exhibition *Masters of Popular Painting* at the Museum of Modern Art in 1938 and in the *American Negro Art* exhibition at The Downtown Gallery, New York, where he also had a one-man show in 1944. His work is represented in various museum collections.

STANLEY SPENCER

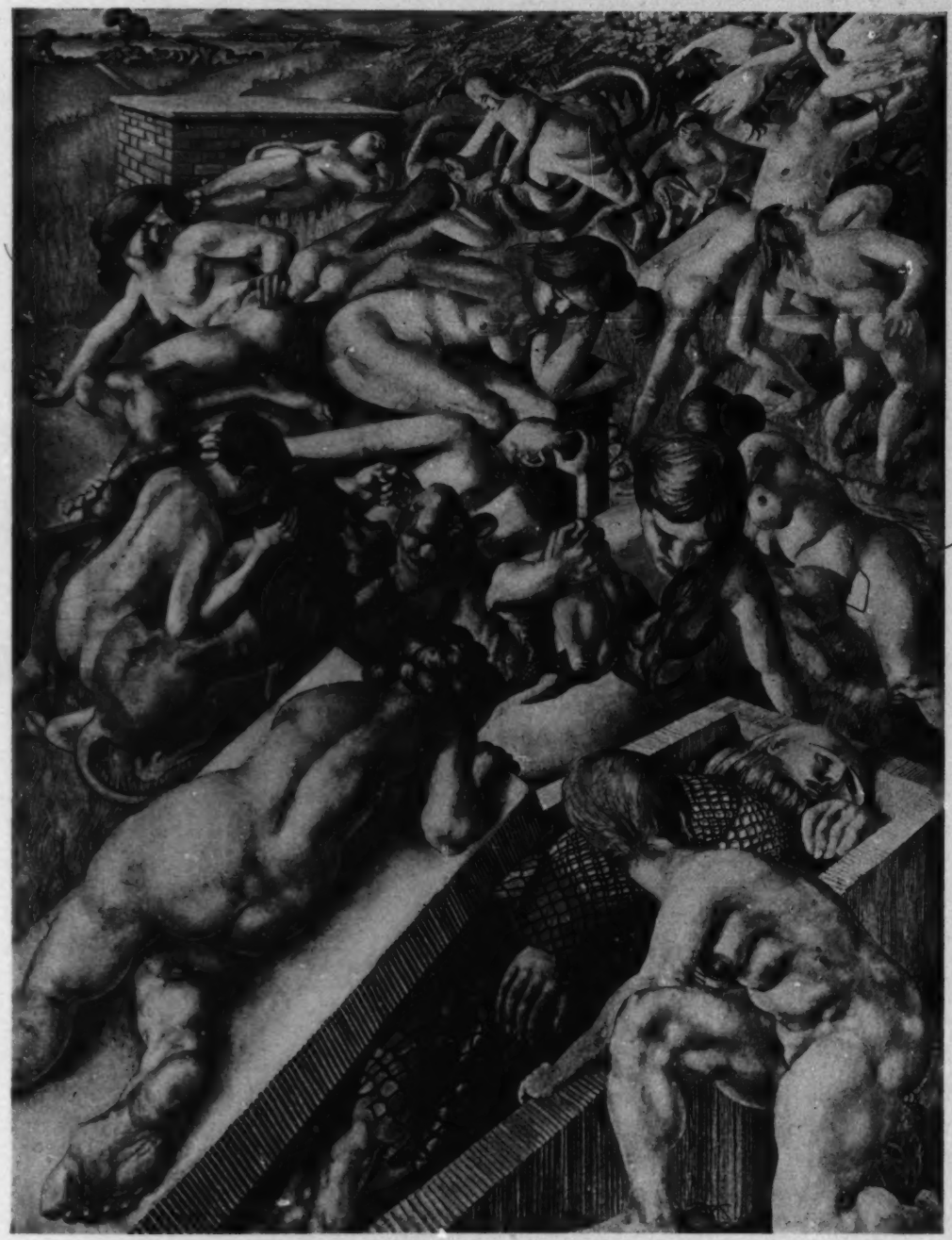
Born 1892 in Cookham-on-the-Thames, near London, where he spent childhood and early years. Father a professional musician. Brought up in an atmosphere of the arts, but also where the Bible was seriously read. Went to London at eighteen to study at Slade School. Remained there 1909-1912. Returned to Cookham where he painted, observing men about him at work and play. Painted religious subjects against a background of everyday England, such as *The Visitation* and *The Nativity*. Served in World War I as a private for four years. Did paintings of Red Cross service in Macedonia. After war traveled in Yugoslavia. Returned to Cookham and painted landscapes and also continued religious subjects. Widely recognized in England and has participated in important exhibitions there and in the United States. Work represented in Imperial War Museum, London; University of London; Tate Gallery, London; Pietermaritzburg Museum in South Africa; and the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Still lives in Cookham-on-Thames.

The picture shows the saint lying in a tomb. He lived for a time in a tomb, as he also lived at different times in a cave, on the top of a mountain and by a river where he is said to have woven mats, and in the picture he is wearing a garment of coarse material of his own making.

It is my intention to convey the impression that St. Anthony influenced his surroundings towards good, rather than being himself influenced by them towards evil.

His temptation consists of his being so moved by God's creation that he cannot or fears he will not be able to be as detached in his contemplation of it as he ought to be.

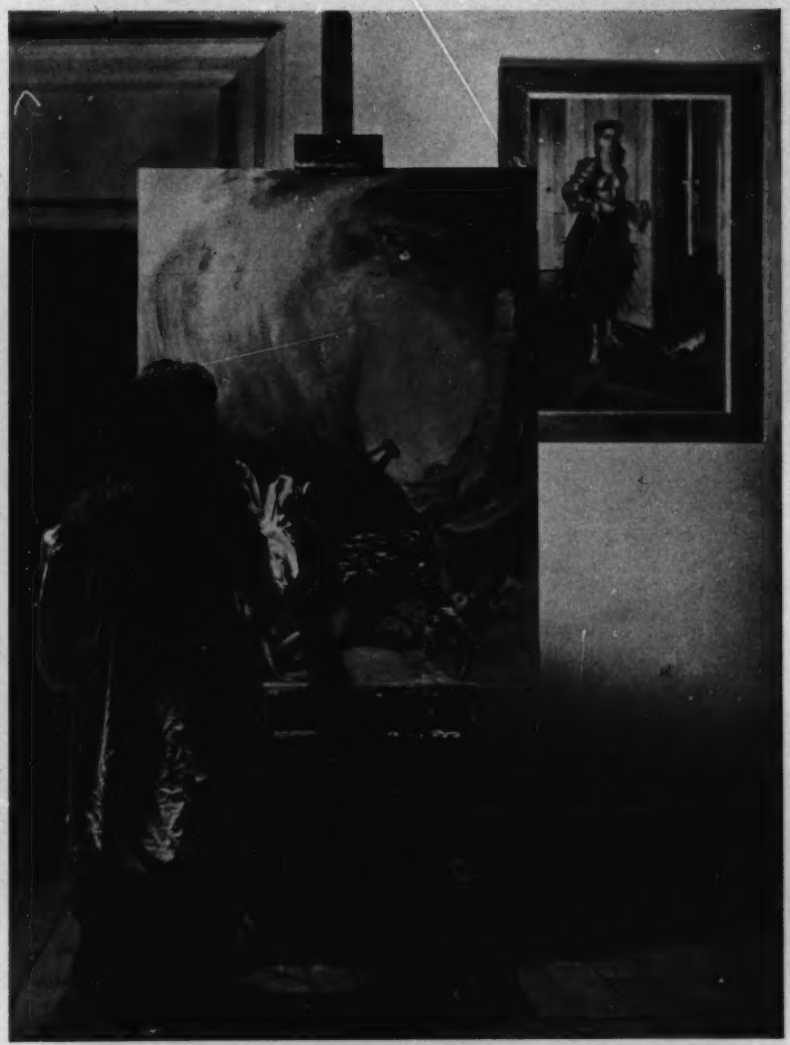
In the picture, Adam is naming creation and introducing man to woman, lion to lioness, the storks, the snakes and so on. St. Anthony contemplates the wonder of creation and is aware of some imperfection in himself but has sufficient faith to realize that, if he adheres to what God has ordained and bides his time, he will eventually experience all the joys of life.



It seems to me that a man like our St. Anthony, with his self-inflicted mortification of the flesh, would be most crushingly tempted by sexual desires and, more particularly, the vision of woman in all her voluptuous aspects.

It is this phase which I have tried to depict in my painting. St. Anthony, alone in the desert, struggles against his visions; half-formed, moving in indolent suggestion, colored with the beautiful colors of sex, his desires take shape even in the folds of his own wind-tossed robes.

DOROTHEA TANNING



Born near Chicago about thirty years ago, Miss Tanning has lived and worked in New York for the past ten years; her family home is now in Galesburg, Illinois. Her first one-man exhibition of paintings was held at the Julien Levy Gallery three years ago. A Surrealist painter, largely self-taught, she is recognized by the official Surrealist group as a newcomer in this group but admittedly an accepted Surrealist. She designed the costumes and scenery for the ballet "Night Shadow" produced at City Center in 1946 with music by Rieti and choreography by Balanchine. At present she is building herself a studio in Arizona. The Julien Levy Gallery will hold another exhibition of her paintings during 1946-47.

Born Poughkeepsie, New York, 1895. He first studied architecture in Washington for a short time and then painting at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. His studies were interrupted by World War I and he became a camouflage artist at the front. Received scholarship from Pennsylvania Academy to study abroad. Worked at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, Paris, and Academie Ranson. Lived and worked in Paris and became friend of many important French artists. Exhibited there successfully with internationally famous abstract and Surrealist painters. His first one-man exhibition in Paris received enthusiastic reception and was followed shortly by first New York one-man show in 1935 at the Julien Levy Gallery; in 1941, second exhibition held at Levy Gallery; many other exhibitions throughout the country. Most recent exhibition held at Paul Rosenberg Gallery in 1946. Left Paris a few years before World War II and has lived in New York City since 1936. He is represented in many prominent private collections and also in the Musée du Jeu de Paume, Paris, Musée de Grenoble, the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, the Phillips Memorial Gallery, Washington.

ABRAHAM RATTNER

I hesitate to use words, written or oral, to try to help anyone's understanding of a painting or any kind of work of art — nor do I entertain any illusion that I can use words to explain my painting. For words themselves do not have the same meaning to everyone. But I will here try to represent, in words, some of the thoughts that entered into the process of the work.

The subject of the theme—"Temptation of St. Anthony"—is widely known and understood, as are the principles (moral, religious and human) involved. Down through Time, the significance of the conflict of Good and Evil, St. Anthony's participation in the struggle, his sorrow, reverence and faith in God, have not changed. All this is timeless and universal. It is the way this theme is interpreted by artists that changes through the ages—for nearly every period in civilization has produced works of art based on some version of this motif.

Each change in the art form is a result of the change from one age to the next of the way people thought, felt and lived. For example, if we examine the works of art of the Middle Ages, we can see how the interpretations of this theme corresponded with the way the people of that particular time lived and thought and felt. This principle follows on down through Time. In the same way, the Gothic works are manifest of the Gothic period, and so on.

We can see how the growth of Latin idealism and the early Renaissance naturalism brought forth the realistic form of the interpretations of Bosch, of Grünewald, of Brueghel, etc. The Italian versions (Orcagna, Parentino, Signorelli, etc.), the elegant theatricalism of Callot, the macabre irony and satire of the Spanish Goya, the metaphysical symbolism in the ephemeral form of the nineteenth century Redon, then Cézanne's interpretation.

I think it important to consider this because it will explain why I could not conceive of painting in terms of any of these forms. The form of my painting had to be of our own time—of today.

It would be quite impossible for me, anyway—and I am speaking only for myself—to try to couch my painting in terms of the Middle Ages, the Gothic Age, or any age not my own— and it would be quite impossible to fit it into the art form of these epochs. Bosch was Bosch; Grünewald was Grünewald; Brueghel was Brueghel, etc.

To try to do so would be false. A subject of St. Anthony's purity and stature would be treated most inadequately, to say the least, if I followed any of these directions.

In my conception of the theme, I wanted the form to be impregnated with only that reality which has to do with my own feeling about this Saint. I wanted to participate in the beauty of this man's sorrow, reverence, and faith in God. The form had to

become the crystallization of that reality. I avoided any attempt at realistic illusion of the representation of the images incidental to the particular elements involved, or the technical conventions generally used in that kind of objective representation (surface, literature, descriptive physical space, photographic detail, wrist-twisting skill, etc.). My painting was meant to be a static complex of light, line, color and space, and monumental in structure. I tried to maintain a simplicity throughout—the subject, the content and the form.

The arrangement of color is simple—but the Red, the Blue, the Yellow and White and Black are used metaphorically as well as structurally, and become transformations of the elements of Fire, Sky, Earth, to help the meaning of the ideal beyond the material. I tried to keep all technical elements appropriate to the spirit and feeling involved. The imagery used was intended to allude to characteristic symbols of the St. Anthony drama.

Some of the imagery, as well as some of the content, might be better understood if I could explain in my humble opinion the mechanism of the forces of Good and Evil. It would take a big volume to attempt a full investigation of how these forces work. But, briefly, to me, there are these constructive and destructive forces always subjecting Man to the dilemma of a choice of one or the other. They work deeply within Man's nature, and any decision he may make has to come out of the depth of his sensibilities, out of his inmost soul. He "makes" or "breaks" himself accordingly. This opposition of Good and Evil forces is always present in Man. Temptation at first assumes a more gentle form of sensual seduction. If it is resisted, the next temptation has a form designed to be more irresistible. At each resistance the form of the temptation changes. Finally comes the form of terror, torture, etc., designed to overcome any remaining courage, moral strength or faith.

Each presentation of a temptation becomes a greater inward struggle, and the process in man is either one of submission—or one of resistance. In succumbing, in yielding, to Evil, man finally loses his soul and falls to the lowest depths of the Beast. If he resists, each victory brings him greater strength until he finally transcends everything and achieves the peace, patience, humility and happiness in the higher form of consciousness, of being. Self-denial, solitude, poverty, his great capacity of renouncing all worldly desires, are attributes of St. Anthony which are the inspiring forces for me in this painting.